

# Native Bee Watch Community Science – Adult Education Research Internship

## Faculty Mentor and Intern Supervisor Contact

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## Extension Agent Mentor

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**Region Participation** - Statewide, remote work with some in-person work (depending on COVID-19 protocols) along the Front Range from Fort Collins to south Denver.

**Goals, Scope and Objectives** - Pollinator populations are declining worldwide, partly due to urbanization and habitat loss. Bees, specifically, are crucial for sustainable ecosystems, necessitating the need to strengthen efforts in public awareness and engagement to mitigate continued declines.

Native Bee Watch (NBW) is a community science program offered through CSU Extension that trains and supports volunteers to identify and monitor bees. As a multi-disciplinary collaboration, NBW's overarching goal is to create a ripple effect of engagement and education based on ecological and social science research.

The NBW Adult Education Research Internship will contribute to the ongoing social science research to improve and build the program, thereby extending its reach and impact. The current research has two goals: 1) Evaluate and evolve the current education program for bee monitoring volunteers, and 2) assess the effects of the design changes from (1) on the social and scientific factors of monitoring, including volunteer skills and confidence, scientific process and understanding, and quantity and quality of data. Results from this research will not only improve the volunteer experience, but will also improve the accuracy of the data collected by volunteers, leading to higher quality ecological research on bees.

This student will support this research by: 1) participating in NBW team meetings, 2) ask a research question based on data being collected, 2) participate in data collection that may include surveys, interviews, social media work, etc. 3) analyze data, 4) share results that may include presentations, informal science writing, and a peer-reviewed journal article.

**PRU Involvement** - The internship supports priority the Environmental Horticulture PRU locally and on a statewide level. The intern's work will also support the PRU's Pollinator Work Group committee that is focused on making science-based pollinator education more readily available statewide.

**Learning Outcomes and Professional Development** - The intern will gain experience with verbal and written communication, working as a team, and applied research and problem solving. They will also gain knowledge in the areas of pollinator conservation, horticulture issues as it relates to individuals and communities. Skills developed during the internship will be transferrable to other jobs and projects the student may pursue. The intern will also have the professional development opportunities to shadow staff in other program areas and will gain a broader understanding of the role of Extension interfacing with research and the community.

**Stakeholder Support** - The intern will work closely with Arapahoe County, Native Bee Watch volunteers and possibly Colorado Master Gardener volunteers. Depending on where the intern is located, there may be opportunities to involve other partners involved in NBW.

**Mentorship Style** – Zarestky values experiential learning opportunities and the development of skills aligned with professional goals. Zarestky and the NBW team are passionate about their work and balance collaboration with independence. The intern will have a support network to rely on, but will be expected to be a self-starter, work remotely without direct supervision, and have excellent communication skills.

**Travel Funds** - If current COVID protocols allow for travel, funds will be determined.